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## NOTICE OF ALLOWANCE AND FEE(S) DUE

30623

7590

10/07/2008

MINTZ, LEVIN, COHN, FERRIS, GLOVSKY AND POPEO, P.C  
ATTN: PATENT INTAKE CUSTOMER NO. 30623  
ONE FINANCIAL CENTER  
BOSTON, MA 02111

EXAMINER

CHOI, LING SU

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1796

DATE MAILED: 10/07/2008

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/409,457	09/30/1999	MARTIN C. FLAUTT	24649A	5361

TITLE OF INVENTION: SUPERABSORBENT WATER-RESISTANT COATINGS

APPLN. TYPE	SMALL ENTITY	ISSUE FEE DUE	PUBLICATION FEE DUE	PREV. PAID ISSUE FEE	TOTAL FEE(S) DUE	DATE DUE
nonprovisional	NO	\$1510	\$300	\$0	\$1810	01/07/2009

**THE APPLICATION IDENTIFIED ABOVE HAS BEEN EXAMINED AND IS ALLOWED FOR ISSUANCE AS A PATENT. PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS CLOSED.** THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWANCE IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS. THIS APPLICATION IS SUBJECT TO WITHDRAWAL FROM ISSUE AT THE INITIATIVE OF THE OFFICE OR UPON PETITION BY THE APPLICANT. SEE 37 CFR 1.313 AND MPEP 1308.

**THE ISSUE FEE AND PUBLICATION FEE (IF REQUIRED) MUST BE PAID WITHIN THREE MONTHS FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS NOTICE OR THIS APPLICATION SHALL BE REGARDED AS ABANDONED. THIS STATUTORY PERIOD CANNOT BE EXTENDED.** SEE 35 U.S.C. 151. THE ISSUE FEE DUE INDICATED ABOVE DOES NOT REFLECT A CREDIT FOR ANY PREVIOUSLY PAID ISSUE FEE IN THIS APPLICATION. IF AN ISSUE FEE HAS PREVIOUSLY BEEN PAID IN THIS APPLICATION (AS SHOWN ABOVE), THE RETURN OF PART B OF THIS FORM WILL BE CONSIDERED A REQUEST TO REAPPLY THE PREVIOUSLY PAID ISSUE FEE TOWARD THE ISSUE FEE NOW DUE.

## HOW TO REPLY TO THIS NOTICE:

I. Review the SMALL ENTITY status shown above.

If the SMALL ENTITY is shown as YES, verify your current SMALL ENTITY status:

A. If the status is the same, pay the TOTAL FEE(S) DUE shown above.

B. If the status above is to be removed, check box 5b on Part B - Fee(s) Transmittal and pay the PUBLICATION FEE (if required) and twice the amount of the ISSUE FEE shown above, or

If the SMALL ENTITY is shown as NO:

A. Pay TOTAL FEE(S) DUE shown above, or

B. If applicant claimed SMALL ENTITY status before, or is now claiming SMALL ENTITY status, check box 5a on Part B - Fee(s) Transmittal and pay the PUBLICATION FEE (if required) and 1/2 the ISSUE FEE shown above.

II. PART B - FEE(S) TRANSMITTAL, or its equivalent, must be completed and returned to the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) with your ISSUE FEE and PUBLICATION FEE (if required). If you are charging the fee(s) to your deposit account, section "4b" of Part B - Fee(s) Transmittal should be completed and an extra copy of the form should be submitted. If an equivalent of Part B is filed, a request to reapply a previously paid issue fee must be clearly made, and delays in processing may occur due to the difficulty in recognizing the paper as an equivalent of Part B.

III. All communications regarding this application must give the application number. Please direct all communications prior to issuance to Mail Stop ISSUE FEE unless advised to the contrary.

**IMPORTANT REMINDER:** Utility patents issuing on applications filed on or after Dec. 12, 1980 may require payment of maintenance fees. It is patentee's responsibility to ensure timely payment of maintenance fees when due.

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**Complete and send this form, together with applicable fee(s), to: Mail**

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**INSTRUCTIONS:** This form should be used for transmitting the ISSUE FEE and PUBLICATION FEE (if required). Blocks 1 through 5 should be completed where appropriate. All further correspondence including the Patent, advance orders and notification of maintenance fees will be mailed to the current correspondence address as indicated unless corrected below or directed otherwise in Block 1, by (a) specifying a new correspondence address; and/or (b) indicating a separate "FEE ADDRESS" for maintenance fee notifications.

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30623 7590 10/07/2008

**MINTZ, LEVIN, COHN, FERRIS, GLOVSKY AND POPEO, P.C.**  
ATTN: PATENT INTAKE CUSTOMER NO. 30623  
ONE FINANCIAL CENTER  
BOSTON, MA 02111

## **Certificate of Mailing or Transmission**

I hereby certify that this Fee(s) Transmittal is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage for first class mail in an envelope addressed to the Mail Stop ISSUE-FEE address above, or being facsimile transmitted to the USPTO (571) 273-2885, on the date indicated below.

(Depositor's name)
(Signature)
(Date)

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/409,457	09/30/1999	MARTIN C. FLAUTT	24649A	5361

TITLE OF INVENTION: SUPERABSORBENT WATER-RESISTANT COATINGS

APPLN. TYPE	SMALL ENTITY	ISSUE FEE DUE	PUBLICATION FEE DUE	PREV. PAID ISSUE FEE	TOTAL FEE(S) DUE	DATE DUE
nonprovisional	NO	\$1510	\$300	\$0	\$1810	01/07/2009

EXAMINER	ART UNIT	CLASS-SUBCLASS
CHOI, LING SIU	1796	526-317100

1. Change of correspondence address or indication of "Fee Address" (37 CFR 1.363).

☐ Change of correspondence address (or Change of Correspondence Address form PTO/SB/122) attached.

☐ "Fee Address" indication (or "Fee Address" Indication form PTO/SB/147; Rev 03-02 or more recent) attached. Use of a **Customer Number is required.**

2. For printing on the patent front page, list

(1) the names of up to 3 registered patent attorneys or agents OR, alternatively,

1

(2) the name of a single firm (having as a member a registered attorney or agent) and the names of up to 2 registered patent attorneys or agents. If no name is listed, no name will be printed.

2

3

3. ASSIGNEE NAME AND RESIDENCE DATA TO BE PRINTED ON THE PATENT (print or type)

PLEASE NOTE: Unless an assignee is identified below, no assignee data will appear on the patent. If an assignee is identified below, the document has been filed for recordation as set forth in 37 CFR 3.111. Completion of this form is NOT a substitute for filing an assignment.

(A) NAME OF ASSIGNEE

(B) RESIDENCE: (CITY and STATE OR COUNTRY)

Please check the appropriate assignee category or categories (will not be printed on the patent): ☐ Individual ☐ Corporation or other private group entity ☐ Government

4a. The following fee(s) are submitted:

- ☐ Issue Fee  
☐ Publication Fee (No small entity discount permitted)  
☐ Advance Order - # of Copies \_\_\_\_\_

4b. Payment of Fee(s): (Please first reapply any previously paid issue fee shown above)

- ☐ A check is enclosed.  
☐ Payment by credit card. Form PTO-2038 is attached.  
☐ The Director is hereby authorized to charge the required fee(s), any deficiency, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account Number \_\_\_\_\_ (enclose an extra copy of this form).

5. **Change in Entity Status** (from status indicated above)

- ☐ a. Applicant claims SMALL ENTITY status. See 37 CFR 1.27. ☐ b. Applicant is no longer claiming SMALL ENTITY status. See 37 CFR 1.27(g)(2).

NOTE: The Issue Fee and Publication Fee (if required) will not be accepted from anyone other than the applicant; a registered attorney or agent; or the assignee or other party in interest as shown by the records of the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

Authorized Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Typed or printed name \_\_\_\_\_ Registration No. \_\_\_\_\_

This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.311. The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 12 minutes to complete, including gathering, preparing, and submitting the completed application form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. SEND TO: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450.

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## Determination of Patent Term Adjustment under 35 U.S.C. 154 (b) (application filed on or after May 29, 2000)

The Patent Term Adjustment to date is 0 day(s). If the issue fee is paid on the date that is three months after the mailing date of this notice and the patent issues on the Tuesday before the date that is 28 weeks (six and a half months) after the mailing date of this notice, the Patent Term Adjustment will be 0 day(s).

If a Continued Prosecution Application (CPA) was filed in the above-identified application, the filing date that determines Patent Term Adjustment is the filing date of the most recent CPA.

Applicant will be able to obtain more detailed information by accessing the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) WEB site (<http://pair.uspto.gov>).

Any questions regarding the Patent Term Extension or Adjustment determination should be directed to the Office of Patent Legal Administration at (571)-272-7702. Questions relating to issue and publication fee payments should be directed to the Customer Service Center of the Office of Patent Publication at 1-(888)-786-0101 or (571)-272-4200.

**Notice of Allowability****Application No.**

09/409,457

**Applicant(s)**

FLAUTT ET AL.

**Examiner**

Ling-Siu Choi

**Art Unit**

1796

**-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--**

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERIT IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to 07/02/2008.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 76-95.
3. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).  
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some\* c) ☐ None of the:  
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.  
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.  
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* Certified copies not received: \_\_\_\_\_.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

**THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.**

4. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
5. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.  
(a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached  
1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_.  
(b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_.  
**Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).**
6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

**Attachment(s)**

1. ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO/SB/08),  
Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413),  
Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_.

**DETAILED ACTION**

1. This Office Action is also in response to the Amendment filed 07/02/2008. Claims 1-49, 51, and 59 were cancelled and claims 74-75 have been added. Claims 50, 52-58, and 60-75 are now pending.

***Examiner's Amendment***

2. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CAR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Ms Carol H..Peters on September 30, 2008.

3. The application has been amended as follows:

Cancel claims 50, 52-58, and 60-75 without prejudice;

Add the following claims:

76. (New) An article at least partially coated comprising at least one surface of said article at least partially coated with a superabsorbent polyacrylate polymer coating comprising:

(i) at least one water-soluble superabsorbent polyacrylate polymer precursor in

aqueous solution, which cures, when the coating is applied to said at least one surface, to form a superabsorbent polyacrylate polymer;

(ii) a viscosity-modifying agent which is a polymeric solution or dispersion; and

(iii) a film forming binder in an aqueous solution compatible with said superabsorbent polyacrylate polymer precursor and said viscosity-modifying agent;

wherein said film forming binder is selected from the group consisting of polyesters, polyurethanes, epoxies, acrylic latex, a styrene-butadiene latex, and mixtures thereof and

wherein said superabsorbent polyacrylate polymer coating absorbs from about 50 to about 400 times its initial dry weight of water when immersed in an aqueous environment.

77. (New) The article according to claim 76 wherein said article is selected from the group consisting of tapes, mats, fabrics, rovings, fibrous strands, laminates, sheets, rods and cables.

78. (New) The article according to claim 76 wherein said article is selected from the group consisting of molded articles, woven fabrics, scrims, wood and paper products, and construction materials.

79. (New) The article according to claim 76 wherein said article comprises a fibrous reinforcing material.

80. (New) The article according to claim 79 wherein said fibrous reinforcing material is selected from the group of reinforcing fibers consisting of glass fibers, polymer fibers, carbon fibers, natural fibers, and blends thereof.

81. (New) The article according to claim 80 wherein said reinforcing fibers comprise polymer fibers selected from the group consisting of aramid fibers, nylon fibers, Kevlar fibers, polyester fibers, polyethylene fibers, polypropylene fibers, and combinations thereof.

82. (New) The article according to claim 81 wherein said polymer fibers comprise aramid fibers.

83. (New) The article according to claim 76 wherein said superabsorbent polyacrylate polymer coating is corrosion resistant.

84. (New) The article according to claim 76 wherein said superabsorbent polyacrylate polymer coating has a swell rate of from about 50 grams of deionized water per gram of dry coating to about 340 grams of deionized water per gram of dry coating in about the first minute.

85. (New) The article according to claim 76 wherein said superabsorbent polyacrylate polymer coating has a swell rate of from about 33 grams of salt water per gram of dry coating to about 66 grams of salt water per gram of dry coating in about the first minute.

86. (New) The article according to claim 76 wherein said superabsorbent polyacrylate polymer coating has a swell rate of about 126 grams of water per gram of dry coating and about 50 grams of salt water per gram of dry coating in about the first minute.

87. (New) The article according to claim 76 wherein said viscosity- modifying agent is an acrylamide polymer.

88. (New) The article according to claim 76 wherein said superabsorbent polyacrylate polymer coating further comprising a wetting agent.

89. (New) The article according to claim 76 wherein said water- soluble superabsorbent polyacrylate polymer precursor is selected from the group consisting of alkali salts and alkali metal salts of a poly(acrylic acid).

90. (Previously presented) The article according to claim 76 wherein said superabsorbent polymer coating covers an entire surface of the article.

91. (New) An article at least partially coated comprising at least one surface of said article at least partially coated with a superabsorbent polyacrylate polymer coating comprising:

(i) at least one water-soluble superabsorbent polyacrylate polymer precursor in aqueous solution, which cures, when the coating is applied to said at least one surface, to form a superabsorbent polyacrylate polymer;

(ii) a viscosity-modifying agent which is a polymeric solution or dispersion;

(iii) a lubricant; and



(iv) a film forming binder in aqueous solution compatible with said superabsorbent polyacrylate polymer and said viscosity-modifying agent,

wherein said viscosity-modifying agent is selected from the group of viscosity-modifying agents consisting of alkyl celluloses, acrylamide polymers, and mixtures thereof;

said film forming binder is selected from the group consisting of polyesters, polyurethanes, epoxies, acrylic latex, a styrene-butadiene latex, and mixtures thereof; and

said superabsorbent polyacrylate polymer coating absorbs from about 50 to about 400 times its initial dry weight of water when immersed in an aqueous environment.

92. (New) An article at least partially coated with an aqueous coating composition comprising:

a water-soluble superabsorbent polymer precursor selected from the group consisting of alkali salts and alkali metal salts of a water-soluble polymer;

a viscosity-modifying agent selected from the group consisting of alkyl celluloses, acrylamide polymers and mixtures thereof; and

a film forming binder selected from the group consisting of polyesters, polyurethanes, epoxies, acrylic latex, a styrene-butadiene latex, and mixtures thereof;

wherein said coating absorbs from about 50 to about 400 times its initial dry weight of water when immersed in an aqueous environment.

93. (New) The article of claim 92, wherein the water-soluble polymer is a poly(acrylic acid).

94. (New) The article of claim 92, wherein the viscosity-modifying agent is a polyacrylamide.

95. (New) The article of claim 92, wherein the film forming binder is polyurethane.

***Allowable Subject Matter***

4. Claims 76-95 are allowed.

5. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

The present claims are allowable over the closest references: Cossement et al. (US 5,236,982), Gaa et al. (US 4,810,576), Arroyo et al. (US 4,913,517), and Geursen et al. (US 5,534,304).

Summary of Claim 76:

An article at least partially coated comprising at least one surface of said article at least partially coated with a superabsorbent polyacrylate polymer coating comprising:	
A	at least one water-soluble superabsorbent polyacrylate polymer precursor in aqueous solution, which cures, when the coating is applied to said at least one surface, to form a superabsorbent polyacrylate polymer;
B	a viscosity-modifying agent which is a polymeric solution or dispersion; and
C	a film forming binder in an aqueous solution compatible with said superabsorbent

	polyacrylate polymer precursor and said viscosity-modifying agent;
	wherein said film forming binder is selected from the group consisting of polyesters, polyurethanes, epoxies, acrylic latex, a styrene-butadiene latex, and mixtures thereof and
	wherein said superabsorbent polyacrylate polymer coating absorbs from about 50 to about 400 times its initial dry weight of water when immersed in an aqueous environment.

Summary of Claim 91:

An article at least partially coated comprising at least one surface of said article at least partially coated with a superabsorbent polyacrylate polymer coating comprising:	
A	at least one water-soluble superabsorbent polyacrylate polymer precursor in aqueous solution, which cures, when the coating is applied to said at least one surface, to form a superabsorbent polyacrylate polymer;
B	a viscosity-modifying agent which is a polymeric solution or dispersion;
C	a lubricant; and
D	a film forming binder in aqueous solution compatible with said superabsorbent polyacrylate polymer and said viscosity-modifying agent,
wherein said viscosity-modifying agent is selected from the group of viscosity-modifying agents consisting of alkyl celluloses, acrylamide polymers, and mixtures thereof;	
said film forming binder is selected from the group consisting of polyesters, polyurethanes, epoxies, acrylic latex, a styrene-butadiene latex, and mixtures thereof; and	
said superabsorbent polyacrylate polymer coating absorbs from about 50 to about 400 times its initial dry weight of water when immersed in an aqueous environment.	

Summary of Claim 92:

An article at least partially coated with an aqueous coating composition comprising:	
A	a water-soluble superabsorbent polymer precursor selected from the group consisting of alkali salts and alkali metal salts of a water-soluble polymer;
B	a viscosity -modifying agent selected from the group consisting of alkyl celluloses, acrylamide polymers and mixtures thereof; and
C	a film forming binder selected from the group consisting of polyesters, polyurethanes, epoxies, acrylic latex, a styrene-butadiene latex, and mixtures thereof
wherein said coating absorbs from about 50 to about 400 times its initial dry weight of water when immersed in an aqueous environment	

Cossement et al. disclose an article treated with an aqueous size composition, the composition comprising (A) a polyurethane/isocyanate emulsion containing blocked isocyanates; (B) a homopolymer of acrylic acid monomer; (C) one or more amino organo-silane coupling agents; and water (claim 1). Cossement et al. also disclose that the composition further comprises a lubricant which includes vegetable and mineral oil, wax, and fatty acid monoester of polyalkyleneglycol and a processing aid (col. 5, lines 50-68), wherein either processing aid or amino organo-silane coupling agent reads on the viscosity-modifying agent. Thus, Cossement et al. do not teach or fairly suggest the claimed article, wherein the article comprises, in particular, a superabsorbent coating that absorbs from about 50 to about 400 times its initial dry weight of water when immersed in an aqueous environment and that comprises a viscosity-modifying agent which is a polymeric solution or dispersion.

Gaa et al. disclose a glass fibers partially coated with the chemical treating composition, the composition comprising: (a) water soluble, dispersible or emulsifiable polyoxyethylene polymer having an effective film forming molecular weight; (b) water soluble, dispersible or emulsifiable aldehyde-condensate-reactable polymeric agents in an effective white-water compatible amount; (c) aldehyde-condensate-reactable organo silane coupling agents; (d) cationic lubricant; and (e) liquid carrier in an effective amount to apply the aqueous chemical treating composition to the glass fibers (claim 1). Thus, Gaa et al. do not teach or fairly suggest the claimed article, wherein the article comprises, in particular, a superabsorbent coating that absorbs from about 50 to about 400 times its initial dry weight of water when immersed in an aqueous environment and that comprises a film forming binder selected from the group consisting of polyesters, polyurethanes, epoxies, acrylic latex, a styrene-butadiene latex, and mixtures thereof.

Arroyo et al. disclose a cable having longitudinally extending fibrous strength members treated with a superabsorbent liquid material which dry fills interstices and covers portion of the exterior thereof, wherein the superabsorbent liquid material comprises polyacrylic acid, polyacrylonitrile, cellulose, or starch-graft copolymer (abstract; col. 4, lines 60-68; col. 5, lines 1-5). Thus, Arroyo et al. do not teach or fairly suggest the claimed article, wherein the article comprises, in particular, a superabsorbent coating that absorbs from about 50 to about 400 times its initial dry weight of water when immersed in an aqueous environment and that comprises a film forming binder selected from the group consisting of polyesters, polyurethanes, epoxies, acrylic latex, a styrene-butadiene latex, and mixtures thereof.

Geursen et al. disclose a substrate treated with a superabsorbent material, which is obtained by (A) applying to the surface of the substrate a treating composition of a water-in-oil emulsion which contains a superabsorbent material in its aqueous phase and (B) subsequently wholly or partially removing the liquid constituents of the emulsion from the substrate, wherein the superabsorbent material can be a terpolymer of acrylamide, carboxyl-containing monomer, and sulpho-containing monomer (abstract; col. 9, lines 1-21). Thus, Geursen et al. do not teach or fairly suggest the claimed article, wherein the article comprises, in particular, a superabsorbent coating that absorbs from about 50 to about 400 times its initial dry weight of water when immersed in an aqueous environment and that comprises a film forming binder selected from the group consisting of polyesters, polyurethanes, epoxies, acrylic latex, a styrene-butadiene latex, and mixtures thereof.

In light of the above discussion, it is evident as to why the present claims are patentable over the prior art.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

### ***Conclusion***

6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the

examiner should be directed to Ling-Siu Choi whose telephone number is 571-272-1098.

If attempt to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David Wu, can be reached on 571-272-1114.

/Ling-Siu Choi/

Primary Examiner, Art Unit 1796

September 10, 2008

